



# Power Outages

## *Your chest freezer*

- Without power, a full upright or chest freezer will keep everything frozen for about 2 days. A half-full freezer will keep food frozen 1 day.
- If power will be coming back on fairly soon, you can make the food last longer by keeping the door shut as much as possible.
- If power will be off for an extended period, take food to friends' freezers, locate a commercial freezer or use dry ice.

## **Your refrigerator-freezer combination**

- Without power, the refrigerator section will keep food cool **4-6 hours** depending on the kitchen temperature.
- A full, well-functioning freezer unit should keep food frozen for 2 days. A half-full freezer unit should keep things frozen about **1 day**.
- Block ice can keep food on the refrigerator shelves cooler. Dry ice can be added to the freezer unit. **You can't touch dry ice and you shouldn't breathe the fumes**, so follow handling directions carefully.

## **What do I do about thawed food?**

- Food still containing ice crystals or that *feels* refrigerator-cold can be refrozen. Discard any thawed food that has risen to room temperature and remained there 2 hours or more.
- Immediately discard anything with a strange color or odor.

## **Is it Food Poisoning?**

- If you or a family member develop nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, fever or cramps, you have food poisoning.
- Unfortunately, it's not always easy to tell since, depending on the illness, symptoms can appear anywhere from 30 minutes to 2 weeks. Most often, though, people get sick within 4 to 48 hours after eating bad food.
- In more serious cases, food poisoning victims may have nervous system problems like paralysis, double vision, trouble swallowing or breathing. If symptoms are severe or the victim is very young, old, pregnant, or already ill, call a doctor or go to the hospital right away.

## **When to report food-borne illness**

You or your physician should report serious cases of food-borne illness to the local health department. Report any food poisoning incidents if the food involved came from a restaurant or commercial outlet. Give a detailed, but short account of the incident. If the food is a commercial product, have it in hand so you can describe it. If you are asked to keep the food refrigerated so officials can examine it later, follow directions carefully. Call 1-888-350-0900 ext. 80904 for more information.



MSU is an affirmative-action, equal opportunity employer. Michigan State University Extension programs and materials are open to all without regard to race, color, national origin, gender, gender identity, religion, age, height, weight, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, marital status, family status or veteran status.

